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## Back in the day...



Well, the long hot summer of pen shows is upon us. As of this writing, Chicago, Boston, and Raleigh are in the books and Miami looms. We still have New York and Washington ahead before the cooler months bring us the Columbus show. And, like everything around us, pen shows are reporting some effect from the economy but collectors are still turning out and buying—even if somewhat conservatively.

At times like this it's fun to look at other sides of our hobby. In this month's issue we have a nice piece on the use of vintage inks. Collecting bottles, inks, boxes and related ephemera is a nice way to round out your collections at a lower price than procuring that holy grail pen. And, to continue with my thoughts above, pen shows are a great place to look for these items. While the tables of pens are often the main attraction, it's always worth a look at those tables filled with old blotters, ink bottles, magazine ads and pen manufacturer ephemera of all stripes. It's also a great way to learn even more about the items we treasure—our pens, of course. Those ads, catalogs, store displays and other materials tell us much about the pen manufacturers, their lines and how pens were sold "back in the day."

As you've seen in recent issues of *The Penman* as well as in this issue, ink is a big part of that story. All of the major manufacturers looked to ink sales as a critical part of their business and companies such as Sanford and Carter's grew larger on the sales of fountain pen ink in addition to the other office staples they sold. The packages were often colorful and attractive to pull customers' eyes to them on the shelf and companies spent lots of money on those designs and the related materials used to sell their products. And, when it comes to ink, one of the most fun things is that you can actually use it today. Whether it's a standard washable blue from one of the major manufacturers or one of the much talked about inks like Sheaffer's Peacock Blue or Persian Rose, vintage ink is a fun way to expand your hobby.

But, of course, we also have lots of articles on pens in this issue as well. I thank our contributors for their pieces this month. The sharing of expertise in this hobby is one of its strong points and we at *The Penman* are always pleased to share in that exchange. Our contributors this month spent lots of time and energy on their contributions and they do reflect their dedication to our hobby. As always, I urge any of you reading this to consider contributing an article to the next issue. Tom and Dede Rehkopf will make sure everything comes out great in print and our designer Fran Conn will make it look great as well. And, as this issue reflects, we urge you all to think of the hobby in bigger terms and tell us about some of the other collecting knowledge you've gained as a result of your pen collecting hobby.

Until the next time,

*Richard Jarvis*

Managing Editor



## FROM OUR PEN PALS

### BRAVO AGAIN FOR A SUPERB JOB

I want publicly to thank Richard Jarvis for the magnificent job he has done on the most recent issue of the *Pennant*. This is the first time that I have written for *The Pennant*, and when he promised me he'd make it easy, he wasn't kidding. My thanks also goes out to Tom and Dede Rehkopf. That my amateur photos came out looking good was due in no small part to their care.

If you are thinking of contributing to the next issue, go ahead. These guys will make you look good. The trio deserve a loud *bravo!* (and an "encore!") from all of us in pandom who so benefit from their selflessness.

Greatfully, Gerry Berg

## THE PENNANT



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### ON THE COVER

Front cover: Adick Lanzbert & Leroy Fainchild dip pens,

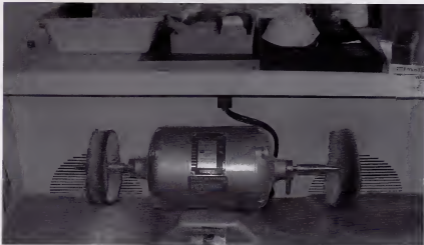
circa 1880s; Quink ink, circa 1900s resting on a 1778

French coat of arms. Photo by Tom Rehkopf

Back cover: Vintage Cartier's ink ad from the collection of Richard Jarvis.



THE ACT OF REPAIRING ANY PEN IS INHERENTLY INVASIVE, REQUIRING A SENSE OF BALANCE between restoration and preservation. One of the guidelines on restoration from the American Museum Association requires the ability to undo any material that has been added to accomplish the restoration. For example, a cap lip crack is unstable and can continue to expand further into the cap. Using solvent welding, material from each side of the crack is fused back together, so that no new material is introduced to the cap. But if a piece of the cap lip is broken and missing and no identical junk cap is available, then I look for the closest match from another cap. By welding that piece in the cap lip, I have introduced a different material and that cannot be undone. I think it is okay to do that because the cap is better preserved by the repair than to leave it broken and possibly suffer further damage.



Polishing setup. Supplies on top, buffing wheel below.

### Routine procedures

Whenever I do something that is going to be moderately invasive, I check to make sure there is no other procedure that is less so. For those things that I do routinely, I already know they are the least invasive procedures that I can do.

I use the term "routine" with some regularity. Routine is a good habit to acquire because once a routine is set, there is no necessity to remember each of the steps for a procedure and recheck to make sure that all the steps have been done. Since routines come from experience, for someone starting to work on pens, there are no routines. A little experience produces sloppy routines and more experiences produce more rigorous routines. For example, after all the filling parts of a Sheaffer VacFil has been cleaned, it is very tempting to re-fit all the parts back in the barrel, then use silicone grease on the places that are

still accessible. This means that the barrel behind the gasket and the filler rod inside the barrel don't get any grease. Not getting any grease on the backside of the gasket is not much of a problem, because grease in the barrel is going to be wiped away pretty quickly. But by then the gasket is well seated. But not greasing the filler rod before putting it in the barrel is a more serious problem. Getting grease into the underside of the packing unit is important because no amount of grease from the outside of the packing unit is going to migrate to the bottom of the unit. Even more important, the top of the filler rod, just below the threads, is quite sharp and can damage the material in the packing unit. Grease will help to ease the rod into the packing unit. One of Fr. Terry's great inventions is the X tool that protects the packing unit when the filler rod is introduced back into the barrel. But using the tool does not alleviate the need to grease the bottom of the filler unit.



Onoto cap and barrel parts.



Filler rod, #1 screw extractor with packing unit ring.



Section pliers. Section gripper is in the center.



Filler rod, #1 screw extractor with packing unit ring.

## Repairing an Onoto

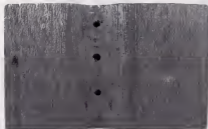
Here is a more detailed description of what I routinely do with a pen repair. The pen in question is an Onoto vacuum filler from the 1920s. First, I review the instructions from the owner on the desired repair. If there are no instructions, I assume it is the filling system, since that is the most common repair that I do. But I've worked on enough pens where the filling system is fine and that's a good reason why a phone number is useful. There are folks out there who send in a pen because they don't know how to fill it and

assume it is broken. Otherwise it could be a crack, or chip, or bad threads or something that is not in any way obvious. In this case, the instructions with the Onoto tell me to repair the filling system, so I know my starting point.

I pull up the filler knob and feel some resistance and I work some silicone grease on the filler rod to ease the action. When I hit a point where the rod hits more resistance, I leave it there and I stand the barrel up in the ultrasonic bath. The mixture in the ultrasonic is 20% ammonia and 80% water. I let the pen soak for about 20 minutes and run it in the ultrasonic for 3-4 minutes. The cap is in the bath as well. I dry the pen and check it out.

It is important to check out a clean pen because dirt and grime masks all sorts of damage. Please don't mistake dirt and grime with patina. The aging process of pens often comes with undesirable effects. These include discoloration, as in the browning of hard rubber or the process of crazing of celluloid, or ink dye staining or off-gassing from the curing of sacs. I don't believe celluloid discoloration is from the off-gassing of new sacs, since that process takes place fairly quickly.

Now that the Onoto is clean, I use a 10x magnifying glass to check for the conditions of the barrel and cap. The clip is sprung but the clip nut unscrews easily so I can take off the clip, bend it at the mounting ring and put it back in place without tightening the top. I will take the clip off when I polish the cap. If the clip was held inside the barrel by an inner cap and sprung by less than 2 mm, I could insert a pick which has a taper below the handle under the clip. By pressing with moderate pressure on the tip of the clip and moving the pick after each press, I can straighten out the clip.



Holder for pin extractor.



Reassembled Onoto.

I have never marked up a cap surface by doing this, but if you want to be extra cautious, use a piece of paper between the pick and the cap surface. If a clip is sprung by much more than 2 mm, then you will have to pull the inner cap and straighten the clip at the bend into the barrel.

It is time to heat the Onoto section and to unscrew it from the barrel. I want to get heat into the threads and heating the section first gets heat under the threads in the barrel. After the section gets warm, then heat up the barrel threads. I use two section pliers, one to hold the barrel horizontal and the other one to unscrew the section. I built some slip in the rubber of the section pliers that holds the barrel and if the threads are very tight, the barrel can rotate. I know that some folks hold the barrel with their hands and the problem here is that the pressure point is not right at the section. It is one of those techniques that work 90% of the time and can court disaster the other 10%.

The section on the Onoto is firm, but not overly tight. I unscrew the section by 1-2 threads and then re-heat. I may do this one more time before the section comes off. Had the threads not budged, I would use the ultrasonic one to two more times and if that didn't work, move on to a series of more and more invasive procedures to remove the section. I've already described those procedures in earlier Tech Notes articles. Taking out a section is one of the most invasive acts in pen repair and over the many years that I have worked on pens, it's the one that I always think about and then do it. Pulling a section always give me pause since there is always the potential that something can go wrong.

Since this article is more about what I do routinely and I wrote

about Onoto piston repairs several years ago, I'll cover the repair parts more briefly.

Use a watch bracelet pin removal tool to drive out the hard rubber pin in the filler knob. Since the rod in the tool is not long enough to push the pin all the way out, I use a drill of the appropriate size and wood block to drive the pin the rest of the way. Unscrew the filler knob clockwise and push the filler rod out the front. The unit that holds the gasket in place is held by a hard rubber pin as well. In this Onoto, that pin has been replaced by a steel one and there is rust there. I don't have a hard rubber replacement pin and will use a brass one instead. As well, the earlier repair used a steel washer as a spacer to hold the gasket in place because the original gasket was shaped and thicker than the gasket we use today. I will replace that rusted steel washer with a plastic one. The filler end packing unit is made from cork and held in place with a threaded ring. A #1 screw remover fits right in to remove the ring. Place the barrel, filler parts, section, and in this case the nib and feed because they were loose and need to be re-set, back in the ultrasonic for another 3-4 minutes. I do this to make sure all the various threads are clean so that nothing binds when I re-fit them. Replace the cork, fit a new gasket, apply silicone grease and put everything back together.

## Polishing

Now comes the polishing part. Polishing is one of the first repair techniques I learned to use over 20 years ago. I used a Dremel for a short while and moved on to a 3600 rpm bench grinder. It took several years for me to learn which compounds and wheels to use and the touch necessary to polish a pen. 3600 rpm is about 60 miles per hour at the surface of the wheel

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# Observations On The Social Hazards Of Being A Fountain Pen Collector

By Mike Walker

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN, AS A SERIOUS FOUNTAIN PEN COLLECTOR, I find that my collecting creates challenges for my relationships with others. On occasions when visitors are in our home, they notice the lighted curio cabinet in our living room full of colorful vintage pens. They comment and I begin to show them some of the beautiful old fountain pens, and if they are seriously interested I take them to my study where there are even more fountain pens on display cases and in drawers.

## Answering questions

After the initial warm interest, the conversation then often becomes nosy. They ask something like: "Which one is the most valuable?" or "How much is your collection worth?" or "How many pens do you have?" Up till this point I have been eager to talk about my pens, but when these questions come I begin to hesitate and hedge; I am reluctant to get too specific and they feel the vagueness in my response. It's a little embarrassing to be forthcoming with these questions, so I usually generalize or turn evasive...not the best for friendly relationships.

On other occasions friends may ask questions like "Why do you have so many of the same color?" How do you answer that? Sometimes they ask "Why do you collect pens?" I know they don't want to hear the full answer, and I certainly am a little reluctant to describe my addictive behavior about fountain pens. Or they ask, "What kind of ballpoint do you recommend?"—not realizing that I haven't been talking about ballpoints and do not recommend ballpoints—that I am only into fountain pens. I have to stammer out something like "There are many to choose from." All in all, when a friend sees my collection, our relationship is not deepened, and they probably go away shaking their heads and wondering about my sanity.

## Loaning pens

I usually carry a fountain pen in my pocket, but often find myself surrounded by people who do not carry any writing instrument. So when the need to write comes, they turn to me and make a disturbing request, "May I borrow your pen?" They never expect to be borrowing a fountain pen, of course. But I have a fountain pen, so I have a problem. There are several ways I can respond. I can respond legally-istically, like "I never loan my pen," and make that clear if necessary to anyone seeking to borrow it. I can respond with more understanding, but nevertheless do not want to loan out my fountain pen...so I have a ballpoint handy just in case someone needs to borrow a pen...and I make sure that pen is the loaner.

At times I am more lenient and loan my fountain pen, but am very cautious in doing so. I give instructions before turning loose of the pen, and watch closely to see that the person uses it properly, and returns it promptly. This can seem like hovering, or clinging until I get my pen back. One could lose a friend or alienate a relative over a request to borrow a pen.

Then there is the problem created by the Montblanc. If I venture out with a Montblanc visible in my pocket, its white star shouting from its crown, it creates a reaction. Some people assume I am rich, while others know I'm not, but are probably thinking I am trying to appear to be so. Some will see the pen and consider I am foolish for spending so much money on something that could be replaced by a 19 cent Bic. The social climber can be jealous, wishing he could afford one, while the person who recently has suffered economic losses might resent the fact that I have one when he can't pay his utility bill. The Montblanc has its relationship hazards.

## Meetings, movies and first impressions

I sometimes want to invite non-fountain pen friends to come to our pen club with me...to share my world and become acquainted with my passions and interest. A few have asked, "What do you guys do at a pen club gathering?" I say something like, "Oh, we talk about leaky bladders, replacing diaphragms, and straightening tines; it's a lot of fun. And we have programs about clips, feeds, sections, j-bars and the curse of brassing. Sometimes we explore the differences between celluloid, acrylic, casein, bakelite, Pyralin and Radite." Needless to say they don't jump up and down with excitement about joining me at the pen club meeting.

On occasion, my wife and I go to a movie with friends. Following the feature, conversation drifts to the plot of the story, the music score, the strengths of the various characters, or the performances of the actors in the movie. Conversations about these things can be the stuff of good relationships, but my mind is somewhere else. I am trying to figure out what brand of fountain pen was used in the two-second scene where a character was writing with it, and whether it was one from the period the movie scene was portraying.

Making friends often begins with first impressions. Admittedly first impressions can be wrong, and they are often based on superficial matters. My snooty-fountain-pen-elitist attitude does not warm as quickly to an acquaintance who wears a Bic in his pocket as it does to someone who shares my taste for fine writing instruments. I was waiting in line at the dry cleaners a few years ago, and there was a stranger behind me. He was a rather unkempt artsy kind of guy with longish carefree hair. He spoke to me, saying, "I like your Conklin," and pointed to the red Nozac I was carrying that day. I was shocked. I didn't know there was a person within five miles of me who knew what a Conklin was, much less appreciated them. We struck up a conversation; he had a few fountain pens which he used and valued. We had immediate rapport because of our common interest in and love for fountain pens. Fountain pen lovers bond quickly.

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THIS COLUMN SUFFERED ABOUT SIX WEEKS' WORTH OF DELAYS because my brand-new computer—purchased after massive failures of the previous computer—apparently decided to go on strike. (Writing an article gets pretty hard when your hard disk and external drive won't let you save whatever you had written before the keyboard's electronics stopped responding to about half your keyboard presses.) With some new drives and a reconditioned keyboard behaving well so far, I started thinking how meaningless the previous sentences would appear to anyone writing a hundred years ago (or even fifty years ago). Might the terminology of pens and handwriting—perhaps the very notion of pens and handwriting—seem as strange to our descendants as computers and e-mail would have seemed to our ancestors?

Many young adults have lost—or, more likely, never acquired in the first place—the ability to read cursive handwriting (or to write legibly and rapidly in any style of handwriting at all). Searching the Internet for items containing the words "cannot read cursive" turned up over 28,000 news-stories and blogs—most from 2007 and the years thereafter—documenting the increasing frustration of high school and college instructors, employers, and others with the growing numbers of people under thirty who cannot decipher cursive.

A piece tellingly titled "If You Can Read Cursive, You're Probably Older than 40" (January 4, 2009) the *Barre* (Vermont) *Times-Argus* newspaper suggests that this situation has existed for at least ten years, all across the USA. Interviews include one with a high school teacher who has had to stop using cursive in class because her students cannot read it and she cannot take time from the required curriculum to teach them how. Niagara Falls (New York) resident Ken Hamilton reports this experience in a piece titled "Cursive, Change, and Customer Care" (*Niagara Gazette*, March 26, 2009):

My handwriting is usually pretty neat and very legible. So I was shocked when my nineteen year-old son and his eighteen year-old girlfriend were sitting in my study and trying to decipher the notes that I had written on the whiteboards on the wall. "What does all of that say," she asked, explaining that, "I can't read cursive."

"What?" I said. "What do you mean, you can't read cursive?"

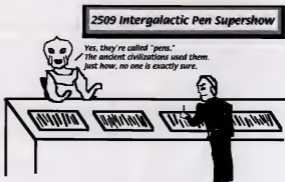
"I can't either," chimed my son.

This was my kid, so the question took on a more intense concern: "What do YOU mean, YOU can't read cursive?"

"D a d," he explained. "They taught us cursive in the third grade, and I haven't used it since. We printed everything after that." His girlfriend nodded in agreement.

At times like that, I really begin to think systematically

about what is being said. I thought about all of the homework that my son had done—and I had checked—and he was right; past the third grade, all of it was written in block letters, and not all that neatly, either.



The shape of pen shows to come?



Handwriting class, 2019? At least one thing will have to change. Once we run out of people who can read cursive, textbook publishers will probably have a hard time selling books on how to write it.

When Hamilton asked co-workers whether their own children (including adult children) could write in cursive:


One said that he did not know; another said that his daughter, an English major, could—but his son could not. However, most of them said that their kids could not write in cursive. ... If I write [my thoughts] in cursive, my yet-to-be-born grandchildren will likely not be able to read them. Nor will their parents.

From all evidence, most United States citizens under 40 never learned to read cursive—and most of those under 30 have never learned to write clearly and rapidly by hand in any style whatsoever. Enough schoolteachers are under 40 (or even under 30) that one has to wonder how someone who does not write well by hand (and who cannot read cursive) can teach these skills to the next generation.

Visiting one highly rated school, I saw a teacher give first-graders a reading lesson which they found incomprehensible because the teacher printed the word “cat” like the word “car.” With the situation this bad already (even in printing), what will happen when today’s scribbled neglected teens become tomorrow’s parents and schoolteachers?

The Pen Collectors of America—and much of the pen community—works hard to counter the snowballing scribal ignorance. “Pens for Kids” has done much to awaken young people’s interest in owning pens and in writing with them. But does this accomplish enough? When millions of American kids, teens, and adults (including, sadly, schoolteachers) cannot write worth a bean, giving them fountain pens sometimes resembles handing a non-driver the keys to a Maserati.

To give the next generation some “pen-driver’s ed,” how about expanding “Pens for Kids” to become “Handwriting for Kids”? UK writing instrument manufacturers did something similar in the 1950s through 1970s when they too discovered that many teachers did not teach handwriting effectively (or at all). Platignum, Osmirod, Berol and others worked with handwriting specialists to create handwriting programs and provide trained personnel to bring these into schools. If schoolteachers can’t keep handwriting alive, pen manufacturers and pen lovers must fill the gap. If we don’t do it, who will?

The first handwriting textbook in our alphabet rolled off the presses in 1522—when its 500th anniversary arrives in 2022, will our culture have forgotten how to write by hand? Or can the pen community act now to make good handwriting common instead of rare? 

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#### Footnotes:

Hamilton, Ken. “Cursive, Change, and Customer Care.” *Niagara Falls (New York): Niagara Gazette*, March 26, 2009. Retrieved from [http://www.niagara-gazette.com/opinion/local\\_story\\_085234915.html](http://www.niagara-gazette.com/opinion/local_story_085234915.html) on March 31, 2009.

Nix, Melissa. “If You Can Read Cursive, You’re Probably Older than 40.” *Barre (Vermont): Times-Argus*, January 4, 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.timesargus.com/article/20090104/Features07/901040346/1016/Features07> on March 5, 2009.

## Tech Notes, >>> 8

and in those early days, a few of my own pens were thrown by the wheels. 1800 rpm is much easier and a real pleasure to use and I like the looks of a polished pen. But polishing is more than for looks since a very smooth surface makes it much harder to capture dirt and grime and will preserve the pen surface for a much longer time. Buffing and polishing has become such a routine task for me that all the decisions and steps are completely automatic. I check the material, look at the condition and the process just flows from there.

These days I use an 1800 rpm Baldor polisher mounted in an air filtration housing. If the surface of the pen is in rough shape, I start with emery compound and then move to Tripoli compound. Since the Onoto celluloid is in good condition, I use the brown Tripoli plastic polish to even out the surface and finish with a one micron liquid plastic polish. Most of the time, I use muslin 6” loose wheels or change to a stretched wheel when I need more aggressive buffing. I avoid the imprint when using any of the buffing or polishing compounds until the final polish and only here will I go over the imprint twice because it cleans up that area.

## Finishing up

Finally, I test the Onoto by filling it first with water and then do some test writing with ink. Of course, when I finished the filling system repair I had already checked it out. With vacuum fillers I listen to the “pop” as the piston comes down the barrel or I check the vacuum on the other kinds of fillers. Filling a pen with water is a real world test and it is a good way to see how well the pen fills. As an example, it is always pleasant to fill a snorkel and squirt the water back in the glass. It always gets to me that Sheaffer invented such a wonderful pen that can do that.

Next, it is time to check the nib and feed. I use my fingernail to test the tightness of the feed against the nib. If the feed is loose, I set it with heat. Then I floss the nib with a 5-inch strip of 600 grit flex back waterproof Carborundum paper cut from a 1-inch wide roll. I place the strip between the tines, pull the strip up one side, reverse the strip and pull it up the other side.

Now it’s dessert time for me: writing with ink on paper. I dip the nib and start to write. If the nib has rough edges, I use medium and fine Arkansas stones to smooth it out. It usually takes me less than half a dozen “8s” to get those edges. Then I use a 5000 grit ceramic stone to get a nice polish with a few more “8s”. To get the final polish and do a final check of the tines for burrs I use an 8000 grit ceramic stone. By now I have written about half a page on a standard yellow pad that has some roughness in the paper. I might write for several pages if it is a really nice nib with good flex and has an interesting cut to the iridium. In the end, that’s all the pleasure and memory I need from this pen, along with the sense that someone else will enjoy the pen for a long time to come.

Good pen hunting! 

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# INTRODUCING FOUNTAIN TO THE YOUNG AND L

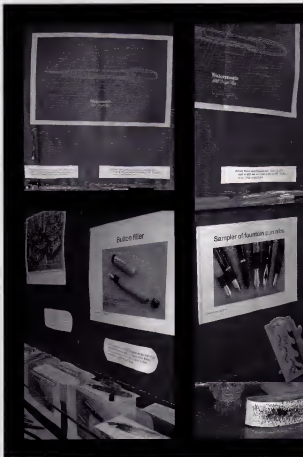
MY CHALLENGE: TWO 6X5-FOOT DISPLAY WINDOWS IN THE HISTORY HALLWAY OF THE HIGH SCHOOL  
BY LAUREL KAUFMAN

A fellow faculty member came up to me in the hall and asked, "Hey, are you still collecting odd fountain pens?" Smelling a possible lead on a pen I brightened up immediately and responded absolutely! Then the challenge: "I have two display cases that are empty. What would you think about displaying some of your pens in them?" After thinking about it I said sure. The gauntlet was laid down with that most dangerous of words, yes.

It did not take too many hours of conceptualizing before I realized the difficulty of my task. Fountain pens are, for me, first and foremost a tactile endeavor. The feel of the nib floating across the paper is a primary enjoyment. I am continually amazed at the actual script or print that is generated. The thick and thin of a flex or italic pen nib is guaranteed to bring a smile to my face. I am especially pleased when the fountain pens actually appear to make my hand writing more legible. So how do I generate the interest of viewers when the senses of touch and the active enterprise of making marks on a piece of paper are not going to be a possibility? The full challenge is realized.

I have never seen a museum exhibit of fountain pens, and I go to a lot of museums. I have not seen any articles written on how to generate excitement about writing with fountain pens. The regular articles in *The Penman* are written for fountain pen lovers who are already well down the path of no return. I was seeking to open the eyes of the uninitiated. I sought new converts.

I began by reviewing reference materials to put a timeline together. Fountain pen enthusiasts are known for our love of minutia. Living with a young adult I "get" that there is only so much patience on the subject of fountain pens. I kept reminding myself I was intent on enticing not driving away. So the timeline was kept short and I tried to include events that a non-pen person might relate to. I had a copy of the "Pens for Kids" presentation created by Linda Bauer and with her permission used some of those photos to also provide visuals. When giving a "Pens for Kids" seminar in Portland I realized that the photos were more powerful when I could pass around a sample of the pen to look at and



# AIN PENS ESS YOUNG

N FOREST GROVE, OREGON WHERE I WORK.

hold. So I chose the photographs of pens in her presentations that I had actual examples of.

I purposely chose to broaden the subject of my display to all writing instruments. This allowed me to include early mechanical pencils which today's teens actually believe to be a modern invention replacing the old yellow #2's. Mechanical pencils are, by far, the writing instrument of choice for high school students, so I felt this would be something that they could relate to. I included a variety of pencils including several examples of the Wahl Eversharp brand and some Victorian telescoping pencils. I even had a Sheaffer demonstrator pencil that showed the internal mechanism. Trying to give perspective, I referred to two pages of slider pencils that were seen in the Mordan catalog of 1898 to emphasize how long mechanical pencils have been around.

Since the display cases were in the history department I looked for ways to connect the history of pens with history that students might be familiar with. I knew there was an advertisement of Conklin pens featuring Mark Twain; every high school student has studied Huck Finn, so they would recognize Mark Twain. So I found a copy of the advertisement and added it to the display. I found a photo of Harry Truman writing with the Waterman signing machine that was used in the White House through Kennedy's term. I included a photograph with the Waterman signing machine that was taken of a pen section of a department store in 1928. The large size of the pen department seemed similar to the size of the makeup departments of today, a concept that all teenage girls could appreciate. I also referred to the Waterman invention of the practical feed system and compared the sales of 2,550 pens sold the 2nd year to 1,000 per day 1901. I correlated this pen sales explosion to the popularity of the Apple iPod of today.

In choosing what pens to display, I tried to pick pens that would be distinctive in their design. My first example was a dip pen, though I referenced the hundreds of years when a quill pen was used. The next pen that followed the timeline was a Conklin Crescent Filler. Since I find that the overlay pens are some of the most distinctive, I included a 1925 Eclipse with a gold-filled overlay. I own a number of Sheaffer balance pens, including two with military clips, and explained the requirement for the pen not to show above the pocket in a

More >>> 23

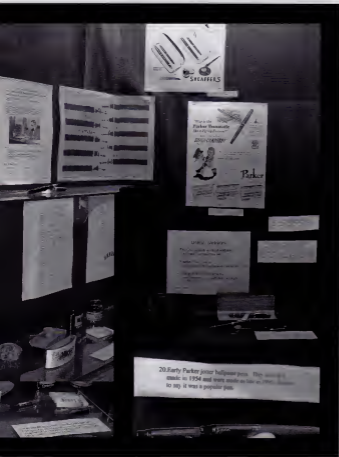


PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHLEY KUCHTSMAN

# THE 2009 ATLANTA PEN SHOW

Koflanta 14th Annual Show Draws Good Crowd

by Andreas Lambrou & Tom Rehkopf

**T**HE 14TH ANNUAL ATLANTA PEN SHOW was held March 20-22, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter NW. This year's show continued Atlanta's tradition of a strong regional show with Southern hospitality, ensuring that those who came had a great time. The weather for the entire weekend was excellent; warm sunny days and cool evenings, fine early spring weather in Atlanta.

This year's show filled up two hotel ballrooms with a mix of both vintage and new pens. Over 60 dealers from across the Southeast and from as far away as the Midwest were on hand to display their wares. The Southeast Pen Collectors Club (SPCC) was a co-sponsor of the show, along with Visconti, Stylas, and Total Fine Writing. Visconti donated the grand door prize, a Visconti "Bible" pen, which is etched with scenes from the Scriptures and is valued at over \$4000.

After the Friday afternoon dealer trading session, Total Fine Writing hosted an open house at their store, which gave show attendees a chance to relax and catch up on all the goings-on. Brenda Epstein and crew prepared a fantastic array of hors d'oeuvres and manchilds to keep people content and happy.





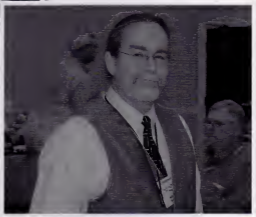
There were three Sunday workshops: Mack Bacas gave a seminar on pen photography, Mike Masuyama discussed nibs, and Roger Cromwell gave a seminar on buying pens. All seminars were well-attended.

SPCC members again offered assistance throughout the show to exhibitors who needed some temporary assistance manning their tables. The club also distributed free lunches Saturday and Sunday to exhibitors, which was a sure-fire way to make friends.

The show drew good coverage in the local media, including a feature article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. Local media coverage is important to get the word out to those who may be just mildly interested or are looking for something to do that sounds interesting. While the seasoned collectors usually know when and where the shows are (one said, "Hey, I'd go to a show if it was in the basement of the VFW Hall"), others who are less informed need a little tug to get them through the door.

"The regional pen shows are the essence of our hobby," said exhibitor and Classic Pens owner Andy Lambrou. "Atlanta, Dallas and Raleigh are just three such shows which I was fortunate enough to attend. The organizers do a great job and are always on hand to help both table holders and visitors."

"These are usually two day shows," he continued, "and the atmosphere is pleasant and relaxed. One gets the opportunity to meet many pen lovers who do not always attend the large shows and there is ample time to talk pens. This is very important not



only from a business point of view, but it also provides an opportunity to form lasting friendships and enhances the enjoyment of the hobby we love."

Mort, Jimmy and the Total Fine Writing crew did a super job pulling this show together, as was evidenced by the steady traffic all weekend. A good time was had by all who attended, and it was a great opportunity to link up with old (and new!) friends. *✍️*

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# THE 2009 NEW ENGLAND PEN SHOW

Boston Beavers Come in Doves

by Vance R. Hoven


**T**HIS YEAR'S NEW ENGLAND PEN SHOW took place rather later in the year than usual, on May 30 and 31, at its usual venue of the Holiday Inn in Somerville, Mass. Host Rob Morrison, trying something a bit new, decided to make the first day of this two-day show a semi-public day: semi-public in that public access was publicized only to the show's regular mailing list.

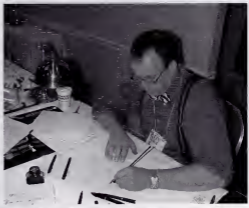
Your reporter was, as he did last year, staffing the PCA table and hawking not only the PCA as an organization, but also (on Sunday) its "Pens for Kids" scavenger hunt. Young persons who successfully identified a laundry list of pen and writing-related objects, and obtained the exhibitors' signatures as proof, were rewarded with prizes of Kaweco Sport fountain pens, and some other colorful pens contributed by an anonymous donor.

The show itself got off to a leisurely start on Saturday, with such public traffic as partook of Rob's invitations not interfering with the usual dealer-to-dealer trading. Sunday, however, was a different matter—the crush began as soon as the doors opened at 10 a.m. and did not let up until late afternoon.

Among the many exhibitors who only appear at this show (too many to try to list them all, alas), was the redoubtable Nathan Tardif of Noodler's Ink (who also brought boxloads of vintage pens to sell at alarmingly good prices), bearing not only his latest and greatest colors and his wosted special show color—a Boston Brahmin Black to go with his previous BB Blue—but also some of his most popular colors in "oversize" containers: pint, quart, magnum and gallon. He also brought an ultraviolet light box to show off his glow-in-the-dark flavors. Co-organizer Pier Gustafson also brought his by-now-legendary three-for-a-dollar suitcase with a wide variety of finds, diamonds in the rough, oddities and, not to put too fine a point on it, junkie. Yours truly, as well as an Austrian gentleman (the father of one of the exhibitors) scored a fistful of early Eversharp ballpoints from this pile—worth every penny we paid!

The New England show, as befits its locale, is one of the major vintage-oriented regional shows (though sporting its share of distinguished exhibitors from outside the region, such as Roger Cromwell, Susan Wirth, Jimmy Dolive and Paul Frano), and as usual afforded attendees great opportunities, not only to find great vintage wares, often at reasonable prices, but to locate those necessary parts and donor pens to bring one's collection into trim. Jeff Krasner, late of the *Boston Globe* (we came within a whisker of being able to say late of the late *Boston Globe*), added to the excitement with a treasure trove of vintage pen boxes.

Within the limitations of the venue (owing, I suppose, to the economic downturn, the hotel's dining room was not open for lunch—providing greater incentive for show attendees to explore some of the great variety of food available in the area), the show was well organized and efficiently run. Thanks to Rob and Pier for keeping this long-running, cozy and friendly show going. 



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# THE 2009 TRIANGLE PEN SHOW

Center of Education and Research

by Tom Rehkopf

**T**HE SIXTH ANNUAL TRIANGLE (A.K.A. RALEIGH) PEN SHOW WAS HELD JUNE 11-14, 2009 at the Embassy Suites hotel in Cary, North Carolina. The "Triangle" area of North Carolina (Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill) is one of the South's leading research, educational and health services centers, and is home to the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State and Duke University, as well as the town of Lizard Lick (pop. 1,300).

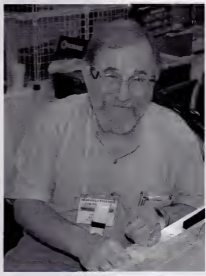
The Embassy Suites features a free breakfast and afternoon happy hour with snacks, so it was easy to start (and end) the day right. There was also a pool for the kids or for relaxing in when the pressures of all-day pen hunting go to be a bit much. The ballroom was large enough to hold the entire show in one room, and there was no breakdown for exhibitors Friday or Saturday night. This made life easier and more predictable for exhibitors and show attendees alike.

The 2009 show was sponsored by Bexley Pen, Franklin-Christophe, Houndstooth Enterprises (Sailor), Swisher Pens, Sharon Luggage, the Triangle Pen Club, Classic Pens, Gary Garner and Stylus magazine. Sponsor-donated door prizes were given

away throughout the weekend. The show was open to the public from Friday morning through Sunday, with Thursday being focused on a parts exchange for exhibitors and weekend registrants. Susan Wirth, Ron Zorn and Gary Garner gave seminars at various times on Saturday and Sunday.

The instructive—and entertaining—Saturday night auction featured more than 100 lots, only a handful of which did not meet reserve. Bidding was






spirited, and auctioneer Terry Mawhorter moved briskly through the lots despite occasional harassment from the audience and "support" from the all-volunteer staff (Howard, Matt, Ben, Dede, Tom, and Becky), fulfilling his promise of a two-hour auction. Auction items included a Waterman 14K 554 filigree, an Eversharp "64" set with solid gold caps, a NOS Parker 75 vermell set with box and papers (\$400), a BHR Parker 33 filigree (\$475), a Parker "51" 14K Heirloom set (\$800), and a Bexley Poseidon Doric with a custom sterling cap band.

A pen show is not always about pens, it is about people too. For the vast majority of people there are two reasons to attend a pen show: to buy pens or to sell pens. Period. But regional shows such as Raleigh can offer a less-hecktic, though broadly varied, pen experience. For first-time attendees, it's an opportunity to stick their toe in the water to see what



Three generations of Kreegers at the Triangle Pen Show. David, Ilana Naomi (age 1 year, 10 months), and Julian Kreeger in front of the registration desk in Raleigh. Julian and David have been to a number of pen shows, whereas this is Ilana's second show. Ilana's initials are, fortuitously, I.N.K.

a pen show is all about: look at pens, ask questions, go to a seminar, sit in a chair in the lobby and watch to see what sort of people go to a pen show (this is an instructive exercise in itself if you have never tried it). For show veterans, it's an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and perhaps strike up some new ones. In a related vein, the semi-traditional Raleigh cigar smoker's caucus met nightly on the outside patio, offering participants an opportunity to swap stories and reflect on the state of pen collecting, if not life itself.

Despite pressures from a slowing economy, the sixth annual Triangle Pen Show was a great success. In addition to the familiar attendees, show staff reported a number of new faces and steady walk-in traffic from the local area, a good sign the show continues to have an impact on the hobby, at least in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area. And proving once again the best place to see pens, learn about pens, buy and sell pens and try out pens is at a pen show. 

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The pens pictured on this page are finds from the ever-resourceful Bob Speerbrother, who you'll find featured as an author in another article in this issue. As an employee of the U.S. government, Bob has spent much time in Thailand and, thus, he finds and sells pens that are a little off the beaten path. These pens are ever farther off the path than usual in that there were made by a Chinese government-owned manufacturing company in the 1950s or 1960s.

# COMRADE Fountain Pen?

By Richard Jarvis

"These pens were found in the attic of an old shop house in Bangkok's Chinatown, where they have been for 40 years. They date from the mid 1960s," according to Bob. The pens have a distinct Esterbrook feel to them—size, shape and even the non-tipped steel nibs are all reminiscent of Esterbrook's larger pen that we all know so well. The filler is a button mechanism that is familiar to vintage pen collectors. The pressure part is an interlocking two-piece affair and loads from the top of the pen with a lip on one piece to hold it in place. The button is then secured with a friction fit over the pressure bar. A simple blind cap tops it all off.





Photographs, by Tom Rehkopf.  
Opposite page: Longevity pen.  
This page, top to bottom:  
Barrel tassies of Longevity and  
Esterbrook J.; Nib and feed of  
Longevity pen.

For being made of hard rubber these pens survived their years in a Bangkok attic remarkably well, with little oxidizing and the original cigar band style labels intact inside the cellophane wrapping. The trim on the pens is a relatively heavy chrome that has also stood the test of age in an attic well. There seems to be little pitting on the trim. Bob did comment that these pens do seem to be better quality than many other Chinese pens he has found from the same era.





Longevity nib.



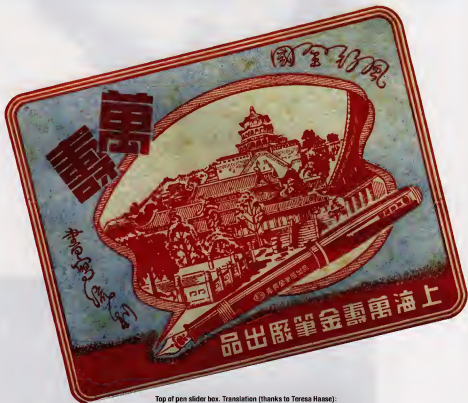
Chinese Longevity pen next to Esterbrook Model J. The similarities are evident.

The box itself is a little worse for wear but, again, in quite remarkable shape for its age. Thanks to some help from Teresa Haase, familiar to pen show attendees as the wife of His Nibs, Norman Haase, the copy from the outer box reads like something from the early years of fountain pens in the United States. Of course, in the upper left corner, is the brand name of the pens—Longevity or Long Life. In the top right corner, the pens are touted as being “Popular in the Whole Country.” At the bottom left of the box the pens are characterized as being able to “write smoothly.” Other copy on the box describes the pens and defines them as fountain pens.

Neither Bob nor Norman Haase knew much else about the Longevity Company or its pens. Perhaps one of you *Pennant* readers have some more information on this and other pens from this era in China. As is obvious from the Hero pens still being made today, the Chinese manufacturers have always been good at “borrowing” design elements from Western manufacturers and these Longevity pens are no exception to that practice. And, like many vintage pens, it’s fun to ponder their use at the time they were made—in this instance it’s easy to imagine writing marginalia in a well known little red book.



Side view of pen tray box.



Top of pen slider box. Translation (thanks to Teresa Haase):  
 "Longevity Pen – Writes smoothly, popular in the whole country. Longevity  
 Gold Pen Company, Shanghai."



Longevity pen deconstructed.

Closeup of clip imprint.







Longevity pen original barrel sticker.

## Pen Introduction, from >>> 11

military uniform in World War II. Of course, I had to include a Wahl Skyline and connected the design to the space craze and Buck Roger's comic books. Several examples of the Parker "51" were displayed. I pointed out that it won a Fashion Academy Award in 1950 and that it was used in the signing of the peace treaty between the U.S. and Japan. I found two advertisements: one for Sheaffer in a May 1942 *Life* magazine and one for a Parker Vacumatic in *Life* magazine dated November 1941. I ended with some examples of early Parker Jotter ball points and an early Sheaffer ballpoint.

I also decided to show the variety of filling mechanisms. The Conklin Crescent Filler was the first example of a self filling pen. A Parker Lady Duofold circa 1932 was used to show an example of a button filler mechanism. I took a lever filler pen apart so the viewers could see the rubber sac. In showing filling mechanisms, a Sheaffer snorkel had to be included. I displayed a Snorkel that had been taken apart, and one with the snorkel tube extended. I used several Lady Scriptsert fountain pens to demonstrate the beginning of cartridge pens. Wanting to provide the full picture I ended with some examples of early Parker Jotter ball points and an early Sheaffer ball point.

To round out the display I included some writing paraphernalia, including ink wells, blotters, a 1920 pen holder, and modern cartridges. I wanted to give an idea of how writing could look different so I displayed copies of writing samples using various pen nibs.

The only frustration I encountered in the displaying was how

to get the pens to sit with the nib showing, as they kept wanting to roll over. I had thought to use pen boxes but in most cases they seemed to detract from the pens. I ended up using clay to create pen pillows by rolling a ball, flattening it slightly and indenting the top; it held the pens perfectly. As with many new endeavors, the time needed to choose the pens and to prepare the commentary took longer than I had first thought it would.

During the six weeks of the display I got a number of comments from both staff and students. I wanted to report what particularly interested them. I was told, "I never thought that there was so much history surrounding fountain pens." Several people said, "I just loved looking at all of the different kinds of fountain pens". Several people asked where I found them all and how many I had. The history teacher whose room was next to the display reported that students frequently stopped to look and made comments about what they saw.

I would say that my first foray into getting people excited about fountain pens with only a display was a success. It may well be a new avenue to create a broader interest and appreciation of fountain pens in the general community. Would I do another display of pens? Yes, I would. In fact, I have been thinking about the display cases on the third floor of the Portland, Oregon library. I wonder whom I should contact ...

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# Using And Collecting Vintage Ink

By John Bosley

## INK

WITHOUT IT, OUR FOUNTAIN PENS ARE MERE COLLECTIBLES, RELICS OF AN ERA when a pen didn't have its own supply of ink just waiting to be called to action. With it, though, our fountain pens become things of beauty and function, allowing its user's handwriting to surpass the scrawl of a ballpoint pen, providing endless possibility and variation to the pen in which it is contained.

I can still remember some of the first bottles of ink that I found "in the wild." They were two bottles of Quink that were still in their boxes. I opened the boxes, took out the bottles and found they still had ink in them! When I opened the bottle, unsure of what I would find inside, I got my first whiff of vintage ink. It has a very unique and wonderful smell, somewhat "chemically" and yet fresh at the same time. To me, that smell is just as much a part of collecting and using vintage fountain pens as lever fillers or flexible nibs. I didn't know it at the time, but I was hooked on vintage ink.



## Starting an ink collection

Collecting and using vintage inks can be just as much fun as collecting and using fountain pens. As a matter of fact, the two go together very well, as the use of one will almost always enhance your enjoyment of the other. There is something deeply gratifying to use an ink that was made to go in a vintage pen. It is as if two old friends are being reunited after a long absence.

Some aspects of a vintage ink collection seem obvious. A Parker "51" collector shouldn't overlook a few bottles of Parker "51" Ink to display in a prominent position in a display case. A Sheffer Snorkel collector can fill his or her favorite Peacock Blue Snorkel from the Ink-Well of a bottle of Skrip Peacock Blue. A Waterman 52 filled with Waterman's Blue-Black is a classic combination of pen and ink.

There is also the "completionist" collection, similar to many pen collections, which involves obtaining a bottle of every color of ink from a particular manufacturer. For a real challenge, try to obtain the original boxes with the bottles. This can be just as challenging and rewarding as collecting an entire lineup of a particular model of pens, but not nearly as expensive. Once you've completed that collection, you can move on to different bottle or label styles of the same inks, or maybe start collecting an entirely new manufacturer. Then there are always the different sized

**Opposite page:** Selection of bottles—A variety of different vintage ink bottles and boxes from the 1920s (Skrip) through the 1950s (Penit and Superchrome).

**This page:** Top to bottom, Ink Scribbles—Samples of various inks, left to right: Skrip Emerald Green, Penit Peacock Blue, Skrip Persian Rose, Waterman's Patrician Purple, Waterman's Aztec Brown, Quink Permanent Red; Carter Cubes—A selection displaying the variety of Carter's Cubes labels. The two larger bottles are from the early 1930s. The smaller cubes are from the late 1930s.



bottles to collect: 2 oz., 4 oz., 16 oz., and 32 oz. and travel bottles.

Hopefully, these bottles in your new collection still have ink inside of them, but that's not always the case. To complicate things further, even if you do find a bottle that's full of ink, there is no guarantee that that ink will not leak in transit or still be usable once it arrives. I have received many bottles of ink that have leaked and ruined the label and box during shipping. Sometimes it is due to careless packaging, sometimes it is simply an old bottle that has lost its seal. I have also received bottles of ink that are full, but the ink has simply gone bad. It is a chunky, black mess that I wouldn't put in the cheapest fountain pen. This is sometimes referred to as SITB (slime in the bottle).

## Vintage color

When you think of vintage ink, you probably imagine lots of blues, blacks and blue-blacks. This might have been the case at the turn of the century, but then again, at that time precious-metal overlays were the only non-black option for fountain pens. Fountain pens were still relatively new and black was safe. In the 1920s, though, the world of fountain pens got much more competitive and colorful. Sheaffer introduced Jadite,

Parker debuted Big Red, and Waterman made waves with its Ripple. It was only natural that inks would become more colorful as well.

In the 1920s, the typical assortment of colors consisted of Black, Blue, Blue-Black, Red and Green. In the 1930s, the colors grew to add purples, browns and a few washable colors. In the 1940s, especially after WWII, the assortment exploded to include a full range of washable colors,



variations on all of the traditional colors and new colors such as turquoise. When I use vintage inks, many people cannot believe that the color they see is from an ink that's from the 1940s.

The next time you buy a vintage pen and clean it out, take a moment to notice the color of ink that was in it. I've cleaned many pens that have blue or black ink that has dried up in them, but every so often I am pleasantly surprised, and I think you will be too, by the vivid color that comes to life after lying dormant for so many years. It's hard not to try to imagine the person who last filled your "new" pen so many years ago with the green, purple or red that's blooming into the water before your eyes.

### Usage considerations

If you happen to have a hard time opening bottles of ink, I have found that some brands of vintage ink are easier to open than others. Bottles of Quink are typically very easy to open, even the small 2oz. bottles. Waterman's Ink has a very small lid, but is still pretty easy to open. I have had quite a bit of trouble with some bottles of Skrip, but they usually open with a little effort. I have some Carter's Ovals that I just can't open, even after using various jar openers! Carter's Cubes can be difficult as well. Although the ease of opening a jar of ink should not prevent you from using any ink you would like, it is something to consider when purchasing a bottle.

Speaking of opening ink, before you ever open a bottle of ink, you usually have to open the box it came in. These old boxes can be very fragile and tear quite easily. I have found the easiest way of opening a box without damaging it is to slide a long, flat object between the lid and the inner flaps (I use a Popsicle stick). Then, slowly prying up, the lid should lift off of the tabs without any risk of tearing the flaps or gouging the box with your fingernail.

This page, from top: Skrip Timeline—a bottle from each of Skrip's different eras: from left to right—ca. 1922, ca. 1930, ca. 1930, ca. 1934, ca. 1945; Skrip Sizes—a bottle of each size that was widely available: 2, 4, 16 and 32 ounce. All are from the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Opposite page, from top: Parker Quink and Parker SuperQuink; a pyramid of Carter's Ovals.



A



### A few words of caution

While collecting vintage ink is fun, there are a few risks to watch out for if you decide to use it in your fountain pens:

Mold can destroy your entire pen and ink collection. Once you use moldy ink in a pen, that mold is now in your pen. If you dip that pen into another bottle of ink, the mold is in that ink. Now any pens you dip in that ink will become infected and pretty soon your entire collection is contaminated. So, it's pretty important to check for mold in your

ink before you use it. It should be pretty obvious if your ink has mold in it. It will be a visible substance, usually white and thread-like, in the ink and possibly on the bottle and

lid. Your ink might also smell unusual. If you happen to come across a bottle of moldy ink, it's fine to purchase it and display it in your collection, but never use it in any of your pens!

Evaporation tends to happen to vintage ink quite often. While evaporation itself is not dangerous and is quite natural, the process can condense your ink and make it thicker than it originally was. If you use this thicker ink in your pen you run the risk of clogging it. If you see a half-full bottle of ink for sale, there's really

no way to know if it was used or has evaporated. It's probably best to not use the ink in a fountain pen, but it will still be safe to use with a dip pen.

Sometimes pressure can build up inside of a bottle. This happens often when ink is shipped to a location with a different altitude. When you



open a pressurized ink bottle, its contents can spray out, getting you and your work area quite messy. If it's the first time you're opening a particular bottle of ink, I would suggest opening it very slowly, maybe even draping a towel over the lid and bottle to catch any ink that might spray out. Sometimes it's just better safe than sorry!

Sediment can form in vintage ink by evaporation or just age. You should always check vintage ink for sediment in the bottom of the bottle. If you see any, it would be best not to use that ink, but if you like to live dangerously, you might be able to strain out the sediment and safely use the ink in your pen. Keep in mind, the sediment used to be mixed in the ink, therefore the properties of the ink may have changed and you might get very different results from a different bottle of the same color of ink. You can sometimes shake the bottle and return the sediment into solution, but I have found that I never get the same color as sediment-free ink.

There are some inks you should not even think about using. They are great to collect, but should not be used in any fountain pens. They include, but are not limited to Parker "51" Ink and Parker Superchrome Ink. These inks were designed to dry quicker than normal ink, so they contain different chemicals than normal ink. They also have an extremely basic pH, which can be corrosive to your pens. Many pen restorers have seen first-hand

the damage that these inks can inflict on your pens over time. Of course, you should only use inks intended for fountain pens, which means that you should never use India ink, stamp pad ink, or any other ink or writing fluid that does not specifically say it's made for fountain pens.

## Making it happen


I know that I've painted a somewhat intimidating and dark picture of collecting vintage inks. Are the bottles going to leak? Will the ink be usable? Am I going to infect my pen collection with mold? It's not really that bad. Sure, there are a few things to be aware of, but it's really no different from buying a vintage pen. If someone were to lay out all of the things to watch out for when buying a vintage pen (fading, cracks, stains, bite marks, mismatched parts, bent nibs, difficult to repair filling systems, fakes, etc), it would seem very intimidating to make your first purchase, but we've all done it and now it's second nature. There's always a bit of risk when buying something that wasn't just made last month. But in most

cases the reward is far greater than the risk. Even if your first bottle of vintage ink is a dud, you're probably not going to be out more than \$10 and you'll still have a nice collectible piece of fountain pen history in the bottle itself.

If you have not come across any ink that you feel safe using or if you'd like to try some colors aren't made anymore, please do what you can to get involved in this aspect of our hobby. Go to a fountain pen forum on the Internet. You can probably find vintage inks that are for sale. If you're not sure of what to try, ask members for



recommendations. Join a pen club. You can probably find members who have some ink that they'll let you try. Another great resource for vintage ink is pen shows. You'll often find unopened bottles for sale at great prices and you can actually examine the bottle, contents and boxes up close—something eBay doesn't offer. By using a little caution before you use a vintage ink, you can save yourself a lot of frustration and ensure that you have a pleasant experience.

Ultimately, you should not use an ink, vintage or modern, if you are not comfortable with it. There are many safe inks and a wide variety of colors on the market today. If you want to expand your options and experience a part of fountain pen history, the next time you fill your pen, you might reach for a bottle of vintage ink. 

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Opposite page: Waterman's 32-oz. ink bottle, circa 1930s and early Swan ink crock, English.

This page, clockwise from top: Cobalt blue, diamond-shaped SuerQuink bottles came packaged in diamond-shaped boxes; retail display box of Carter's American Blue, circa 1941; Sanford's and Carter's ink bottles; detail of Bakelite cap on Waterman bottle as shown on opposite page; Carter's wooden ink box with one of its ink bottles.



# IMPRINTS

# INSTRUCTIVE

BY MIKE WALKER

**C**OLLECTORS HAVE GROWN used to imprints on fountain pens which give the manufacturer, and sometimes the model; some have the date and place of manufacture,

some give a patent number, and some have a patent date or "patent pending." But some manufacturers expected that their buyers might not be familiar with their product, and they wanted to make clear how their pen was to be used, so they printed the instructions right on the pen.

## Conklin fillers

Perhaps one of the more familiar examples of this practice is the twist knob on the piston at the barrel end of a Conklin Nozac. In small letters encircling the end is printed **FILL → ← EMPTY**, indicating which direction the knob should be turned for the desired function. Perhaps this was primarily for first time users who had been in the habit of using a Parker button filler or a Sheaffer lever filler. If you got the Nozac as a gift, without the benefit of a salesperson demonstrating how the pen was used, and if like many of us you didn't want to take time to read the instructions for such an everyday instrument, the simple instructions were imprinted there when you started to fill the pen with ink...and they were there if you forgot later which direction to turn the knob. And then there's the matter of the size of the instructions. The letters are very small and written in a circular way on the very end of the pen; one would hardly notice them unless examining the pen with a microscope, but they are there. Another Conklin pen, the twist filler, has a small curved arrow on the bottom of the twist button, with no words.

## So, how do I remove the cap?

Conklin also felt compelled to help owners with the cap. Some early Conklin Crescent Fillers had the outline of a hand on the cap, with a finger pointing (☞) in the direction the cap should be turned to open the pen and the word "unscrew" above the hand.

Likewise, the O. T. Johnson Company made a black chased hard rubber fountain pen that







looks similar to many other fountain pens of the early 20th century, but they went an extra step toward clarity. On their barrel they imprinted the word "Turn" over a pointing hand ( $\rightarrow$ ) to indicate which direction the cap turns to loosen. This imprint is in white so that is clearly visible on the black cap. I have an early BHR Sheaffer which has a similar imprint on the cap, though not highlighted in white. I guess they were never expecting that anyone would be confused as to how to put the cap back on, for the imprint only indicated how to open it. After an era when slip caps had been common and many of them were probably still in use, the "Turn" imprint on the cap was likely considered protection from someone who tried to pull the cap off rather than unscrew it.

Another early chased hard rubber pen has the wording on the cap "Remove This To Fill." This pen is marked "J.N. & S. 'Whitehall' Self-Filling Pen." It has a quite unique profile for an early hard rubber pen and has matching gold bands on the barrel and cap. It is filled by means of a hard rubber push-pull piston. The Whitehall also has a gold metal overfeed covering the slit in the nib and running the full length of the exposed nib.

### In the trenches

I also have a black chased hard rubber eyedropper "Soldiers' Special" trench pen that has a lid above the cap clip that unscrews to reveal a small cavity for holding ink pellets. No doubt this was very practical for soldiers in World War I when carrying a glass ink bottle would have seemed unnecessarily bulky, and perhaps vulnerable to breakage. But in case the writer did not understand where the pellets were, there is an imprint at the top of the cap which says "Ink Tablets, Unscrew top 1". I don't know about finding this little inscription at dusk in a foxhole, but if you read it once, maybe you could remember. Also, if one of the Soldiers' Special pens was borrowed by someone, these little instructions on the very top of the cap would be welcome news to the user who, though unfamiliar with the pen, wanted to write Mom but didn't bring an ink bottle with him to battle.

### Crocker and Chameleon

Crocker had a unique kind of lever at the end of the barrel on its BCHR pens. A round button on the end of the barrel was attached to the lever bar and had to be turned before the lever could be lifted. Turn it the opposite way and the lever would be locked. Inscribed on the sides of the button of some of these pens is "TURN" to indicate

the direction required to release the lever.

The Chameleon fountain pen, made in Chicago, solved the communication matter with color rather than with an imprint. If you wanted to know which end of their two-ended fountain pen had red ink, there was a red ring imbedded in the celluloid next to the section. Another ring, this one blue, was imbedded near the section of the other nib. The two rings let you know which nib use for which color.

### Spell it out

More modern users apparently need it spelled out, too. The Parker "51" had instructions stamped into the metal sleeve of the aerometric filler: "To fill, press ribbed bar firmly 4 times holding pen point down. Wipe point with soft tissue." Another "51" filler instructs "...6 times..." On the similar aerometric filler of the Parker 21 is stamped in the metal sleeve, "To fill, press ribbed bar three times. Wipe front end, pen point down, using soft tissue. Use Superchrome Ink." If such instructions are needed to fill the pen, one wonders who would have been smart enough to unscrew the barrel to find the instructions. Maybe they should have written "unscrew here" on the outside of the barrel, too. There are other variations in the wording on the Parker aerometric filling units.

What made the designers of these pens give these **More >>> 34**

Opposite page from top: Conklin Nozac; "Soldier's Special" Trench pen cap. This page, clockwise, from top: Whitehall pen cap and barrel, Whitehall cap with "Remove This To Fill" imprint. Conklin twist filler arrow.



## Buying pens on



By Robert M. Speerbrecher

**Y**OU HAVE SEEN THE POSTS ON THE VARIOUS PEN forums. "Don't do it." "You'll get scammed." "Lots of pens on eBay are fake." "Don't buy a pen you cannot test first." Then there are the stories of the broken Vacumatic sold as "Mint," the pens bought from overseas that never arrive, and the sellers who list every pen as "Rare." Yes, some of these are legitimate issues with eBay. eBay has more than 2,000 full time employees policing the site's 100 million listings round-the-clock. They are there for a good reason. Like any marketplace there are honest sellers, not-so-honest sellers, and the just plain clueless sellers.

Still, whether you're a novice collector or an acknowledged expert, eBay is nearly impossible to ignore. The site's Pens and Writing Instruments category is loaded with marvelous deals, hidden treasures and, just maybe, that red Parker Giant that you have been seeking for several years. Over 21,000 pen auctions are listed on the day I'm writing this article. How long can a pen collector really avoid such an incredible 24/7 flea market, estate sale, and pen store all wrapped into one easy-to-use package?

I have 10 years and more than 20,000 successful transactions on eBay. While the vast majority of those transactions were as a seller, I'm a regular buyer on eBay as well. I talk to other buyers and sellers regularly, and hardly a week goes by that I do not get an email from someone asking my advice about buying or selling on eBay. While I do not claim to be an expert at everything in the Internet pen world, I do think I have the whole eBay-buying-and-selling-without-losing-money system figured out. These are my top 10 pieces of advice for avoiding a disappointing eBay buying experience. I will write a future article about selling on eBay.

**If it is too good to be true, it probably isn't true.** Your mother told you this and it is good advice. No one sells brand new Montblanc

pens at 80% under retail. If the deal just doesn't make sense, be very suspicious. Compare pricing with what other dealers are asking for the same product and, if the price is way out of line, gather more information before buying. With used and vintage pens, there is much more flexibility due to condition, scarcity and perceived value. When buying new pens, buy from a trusted seller. Nearly all counterfeit pens are one of four brands: Montblanc, Cartier, S.T. Dupont and Parker. Keep that in mind. Counterfeit vintage pens are exceptionally rare but show up on occasion. You do have to watch out for the occasional "Frankenpen"—a pen assembled from a pile of parts that may or may not reflect an original pen.

**Don't get caught up in the bidding, paying more than you're comfortable with.** Before you start bidding, set a limit and don't exceed it. Spend a little time investigating the going price for the pen. Unless it's a very rare pen, there will likely be some market data available. Check past auctions on eBay, other auction sites, and Google it. Once you set your top price, stick with it. Unless the pen is exceedingly rare, you'll likely not have to wait long before another one shows up on eBay and you can try again.

**Check seller's references and feedback.** While eBay's feedback system is not perfect, it's still a very, very good way to check out the seller. A seller can game the system for awhile, so be extra careful if the seller's feedback is under 100. Once over 100, you're likely dealing with a serious seller. Also look at what they buy and sell to be sure these are real products, and not low cost items to build feedback. Go look at the feedback and read the comments, especially the negative ones. Every seller will get a negative feedback every so often no matter how hard they try. There are bad buyers out there who insist on leaving a negative feedback no matter how hard you try to fix a problem. I got my first negative feedback after 999 positive feed-

backs. I tried hard to satisfy the buyer and eventually gave him the pen for free, yet he still insisted on the negative feedback. If someone has a ratio of one negative for every 300-400 positive, there is likely nothing to worry about. Also, if this is a big purchase, ask about the seller on one of the online pen forums and Google the seller's eBay name. See what comes up.

**Ask questions.** eBay makes it easy to contact the seller. Do not hesitate to use the eBay message system to ask questions. I would never buy from a seller who doesn't answer my questions or who seems evasive in their answer. Also check out the seller's other items. If they usually sell dolls and just have one pen, maybe that's why they don't seem to know much about pens. Take this into consideration when bidding. Sometimes this is when you can get a good deal, but ask a lot of questions.

**Return policy.** With few exceptions, do not buy from a seller who doesn't allow returns. Sometimes a seller will sell a pen that requires repair or is for parts, selling it AS-IS with no return. That's fine, but it should clearly be stated. If they do not state a return policy, be sure to ask. If they will not take a return or exchange, stay within your comfort level as to what you're willing to risk if the pen turns out to not work out for you.

**The more information the better.** Look for detailed descriptions and excellent photos. Does it state the nib size and material? Does the photo match the description? Is a converter included if it's a cartridge/converter pen? Does it come with a box? Watch out for tricks like "Montblanc-type pen" and "Famous brand" with no name but showing a name brand pen in the photo. By showing a photo of a pen that looks like a Montblanc, for example, but not ever saying it's a Montblanc, they sell you a fake, but can claim they never said it was a Montblanc pen. Read the fine print, if there is any. Pay attention to the shipping fees. Are they reasonable? Did they even state the fees? If not, why not? Never buy from a seller selling a pen for \$1 or a very low price and charging very high shipping. They are gaming the eBay system so they do not have to pay appropriate eBay fees (or appropriate income tax by making their profit numbers seem lower). If they are cheating eBay (and maybe the IRS), they will cheat you too.


**Be smart when paying.** Before you bid, note how the seller will accept payment. Never pay by wire or cash because you have almost no way to get your money back if the seller turns out to be dishonest. Most U.S. sellers will accept a cashier's check or money order; however eBay doesn't allow them to say this in the listing, so you should ask before bidding. But, if the sale was a scam or the seller refuses a return, you have little recourse. Pay sellers outside the US via Paypal ONLY. Paypal is by far the most popular and convenient way to pay for your eBay purchases. Paypal is free to the buyer and absolutely secure. Opening an account is very easy and only requires basic financial information so they can be sure you're a legitimate buyer. If there is a problem with a transaction, you can dispute it via Paypal, and unless the seller can prove the buyer is at fault, they nearly always settle in favor of the buyer. In the case of a scam where the seller has emptied the account and disappeared, Paypal offers up to \$2,000 in buyer protection. You should also tie your credit card to your Paypal account and use it for payment.

That way if there is a problem, you can dispute the transaction with the credit card company. Also, if a seller will take a credit card directly you have that protection. Just do not send your credit card number in an email. Use their secure check out system, if they have one, or do the transaction by phone.

**Overseas buying.** Pens are everywhere, not just in the U.S. You can get some great deals when buying from other countries. I lived in Thailand for three years, and the pens I got there on a weekly basis were amazing. The world is full of great pens, and eBay gives us more access to them than ever before. However, buying outside the U.S. can be more risky. This is especially true when buying from unknown sellers in far off lands. For the most part you have no legal recourse at all if there is a problem. Shop internationally, but be more careful. If you do really want to buy something from an unproven (low feedback, unknown) seller, don't bid more than you're willing to lose.

**Watch out for all the usual eBay scams.** Educate yourself about scams associated with eBay. Double check anything that seems even remotely suspicious. There is lots of information in the site's security area. Read it and be familiar with the latest scams. Use eBay's messaging system for all communications with the seller so there is a record. Watch out for fake and "phishing" emails supposedly from eBay. Use the My eBay, My Messages feature to be sure any emails from eBay are really from eBay. Unless you're certain an email came from eBay, never click on a link in an email. Go to your My Messages, it should be in there. If you follow eBay's rules and do not take undue risks, it's very unlikely you'll ever have a problem.

**Be reasonable and patient.** Like with any transaction, sometimes things do go wrong. I doubt there is a single pen collector that hasn't at least once bought a pen at the show and got home to find a crack or other problem that they and the seller missed. Who hasn't bought a new pen that they just couldn't get to feed well? Things do go wrong, and most likely the sellers had no intention of selling you a defective product or misleading you. Contact the seller and discuss the issue. If you followed my advice and bought from a seller who will take a return, they will take the pen back with no problem. Be sure to pack it well when you return it. It wouldn't be fair to the seller if it was returned in even worse condition than when he shipped it. Give the seller plenty of time to fix the issue and do not put in a complaint with eBay or Paypal unless you just cannot work out the problem with the seller. Once the problem is resolved, be sure to give positive feedback. Never leave negative feedback without discussing the problem or reason with the seller first. Most sellers will go to extraordinary lengths not to get a negative feedback.

Ten years ago it would take a collector one year, if not a lifetime, of pen shows, flea markets and estate sales to build a significant pen collection. Now it can be accomplished in a matter of weeks or months online. No online experience will ever beat that feeling you get when you find a mustard yellow Parker "51" at a yard sale for \$5, but in reality, chances are that won't happen very often, and there are four of them on eBay today. (Not for \$5, however!). Happy Collecting! 

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## Instructive Imprints, from >>> 31

instructions on their pens, while others did not? Was it they just had a special commitment to clarity...or helpfulness? Was it that they thought that some of their customers were rather dull? In the case of Conklin and Parker, why did they settle for written instructions on paper packed with the pen for most, but with these pens go the extra mile and imprint it on the pen? Like so many questions as to "why" in the history of pen making, these questions will probably go unanswered.

Perhaps the king of all imprints is one which emerged from a lawsuit by L. E. Waterman Company against A. A. Waterman, seeking to end A. A.'s use of the Waterman name on his pens. The L. E. Waterman Co. was the giant in pens at the beginning of the twentieth century and did not appreciate competition by a small maker with the same last name.

The settlement required A. A. Waterman to mark its pens with the following extensive imprint:


ARTHUR. A. WATERMAN & CO. NY.

MODERN PEN CO. SUCCESSOR

PAT. NOV. 17, '06. OCT. 11 '04. AUG. 31 '16

NOT CONNECTED WITH

THE L. E. WATERMAN CO.

While this imprint was not instructive about the use of the pen, it went to extraordinary lengths to help the potential buyer be clear about the maker of the pen, and where it should be sent if warranty service was needed. While the imprint is very long, it does not show up very well on the BCHR pen I have. The last line bleeds into the chasing on the barrel and the black on black of the entire imprint is only therefore readable in the right light and only if one tries intently to read all the print on the barrel. The clip, however, is clearly marked, "THE AA. CLIP" 

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Crocker "Turn" imprint.



O. T. Johnson pen.



Sheaffer BCHR Turn imprint.

# WORD FIND

A PEN PUZZLE SUBMITTED BY JOHN JENKINS

Find the words from the list in the grid and circle them. Words can go in any direction.

The unused letters solve the riddle: "It's never dull."

Answer is on page 42.

L	C	C	C	A	R	T	E	R	S	E	L	F	F	I	L	L	I	N	G
I	I	H	B	R	E	A	K	A	E	L	E	B	O	E	U	F	E	R	E
F	R	I	C	L	E	A	N	D	C	G	T	R	I	U	M	P	H	O	O
E	T	L	F	L	I	S	C	I	T	A	M	U	C	A	V	R	S	J	R
T	E	T	L	E	T	N	C	T	I	E	V	O	W	S	O	S	A	A	G
I	M	O	A	I	O	E	D	E	O	D	N	R	W	N	O	N	A	M	E
M	O	N	T	B	L	A	N	C	N	W	I	A	I	R	E	C	J	D	S
E	R	R	T	U	B	E	I	O	A	T	N	M	C	S	O	E	R	O	P
S	E	D	O	D	D	L	M	Y	P	P	F	A	V	N	W	J	I	R	A
B	A	E	P	A	A	A	S	K	N	I	E	I	K	E	I	O	N	I	R
Y	A	S	J	T	I	T	N	Q	U	I	L	L	L	I	N	T	G	C	K
G	A	K	I	D	E	G	O	L	D	L	I	O	O	L	L	T	T	O	E
O	E	W	E	W	O	R	R	A	E	N	P	I	T	H	E	E	O	V	R
L	P	U	A	L	U	C	K	Y	C	U	R	V	E	H	Y	R	P	E	O
D	L	R	V	K	I	R	E	T	H	G	I	L	F	K	B	E	T	R	L
B	T	L	E	K	C	T	L	E	G	A	C	Y	N	R	A	S	K	L	I
O	P	D	E	L	N	U	E	R	M	A	B	I	E	T	O	D	D	A	A
N	S	N	H	V	U	I	T	N	E	D	U	T	S	P	R	U	B	Y	S
D	A	A	F	E	E	D	U	N	N	Q	S	N	O	S	I	R	R	O	M
P	W	H	U	N	D	R	E	D	Y	E	A	R	E	F	F	A	E	H	S

AEROMETRIC

ARROW

BAKELITE

BLIND CAP

BLOT

BLUE DIAMOND

BREAK

BURP

CARTERS

CHILTON

CLEAN

CONKLIN

CONWAY STEWART

CRESCENT FILLER

CROSS

DESK

DORIC

DUBIEL

DUNN

EAGLE

ESTERBROOK

FEED

FLAT TOP

FLIGHTER

GEORGE S PARKER

GOLD

GOLD BOND

HAND

HUNDRED YEAR

INK

INK VUE

ITALIC

JADE

JANESVILLE

JEWEL

JOTTER

KEYHOLE

LE BOEUF

LEGACY

LEVER

LIFETIME

LUCKY CURVE

MABIE TODD

MAJOR

MINOR

MONTBLANC

MORRISON

NO NAME

OVERLAY

PELIKAN

PILOT

POST

PRELUDE

QUILL

QUINK

RADITE

RING TOP

SAILOR

SECTION

SELF FILLING

SHEAFFER

SNORKEL

STUDENT

SWAN

TIP

TRIUMPH

TUCKAWAY

VACUMATIC

WAHL

WASP

WIN

WIRT

FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

## HOPES AND DREAMS

I sit writing this column as the long warm wonderful days of summer finally reach us up in Portland, Oregon. One of my great joys this time of year is sitting out in my pin-size garden, reveling in the "gloaming" northern light and listening to the birds and the sounds of barbecue from nearby backyards way into the candle-illuminated evenings, far away from the energy-consumptive machines and devices that control much of the rest of my day.

Last week I was sharing this simple pleasure with a colleague at work. She recalled that studies taken of the air over the United States in the three days following 9/11 when the planes didn't fly demonstrated a reduction in pollution and an increase in heat dispersion that actually "cooled us off" for a significant period of time after that. During that same chai tea break (hey, this IS Portland), we dreamed up the idea of a "Green Sabbath." We envisioned choosing a specific day of the week and encouraging people to give up using as much non-renewable energy as possible. Participants would turn off computers, unplug televisions, open cans with hand-held can openers, walk around the neighborhood, sit on their porches, eat fresh salads, and in short, take the time necessary to experience life the slower and gentler "old fashioned" way.

Now, there's probably as good a chance of that happening on a large scale as my dog Doodle performing on *Prairie Home Companion*. On the other hand, it was a thought process that led me back, yet again, to why I accumulate and use fountain pens. My pens are a constant reminder to me of a period in history when people took time to communicate with others in a slow, thoughtful, and tangible way. When I uncap my pen and put it to the page, I automatically slow down and enjoy the ride. Even if it's writing out checks (no online banking for me, no sirree), I am aware of the letters forming on the page and take time to make them look...well...better than they would have with my BIC. I even imagine the underpaid accounts receivable clerk saying, "Wow—look! Cool handwriting and ink color! Could it be a cursive italic Namika Falcon with Diamine Monaco red?" (Okay, my dreams do get a little far-fetched).

So here's my backyard seasonal lemonade-and-hammock wish to you—create just a little green space in your life by by using your pens to conserve pixel energy and renew your connection with the page. It's a grand way to savor the summer daze.

Carla Moertensen



## JOIN A CLUB

Looking to network with fellow pen collectors?

Check out a local pen club. Not listed here? Email your club information including contact name, email and phone number to [info@pencollectors.com](mailto:info@pencollectors.com)

Baltimore Fountain Pen Society  
Contact: Teri Lura Bennett  
[LauraBennett@comcast.net](mailto:LauraBennett@comcast.net)  
[website.baltpens.org](http://website.baltpens.org)

D.C. Metro Pen Club  
Contact: Harry Shubin  
[shubin@mswrb.com](mailto:shubin@mswrb.com)  
Ph: 703.812.5306

Florida Pen Collectors Club  
Contact: Giovanni Abrate  
[tryphon.it@pc](mailto:tryphon.it@pc)  
[fpc@tryphon.it](mailto:fpc@tryphon.it)

Kansas City Pen Club  
Contact: Dennis Bowden  
[sales@parkvillepen.com](mailto:sales@parkvillepen.com)

Las Vegas Pen Club  
Contact: Debbie Lambert  
[decala2@earthlink.net](mailto:decala2@earthlink.net)

Long Island Pen Club  
Contact: Nancy Handy  
[nhandy@optonline.com](mailto:nhandy@optonline.com)

Michigan Pen Collectors  
Contact: C. Eric Fonville  
[fonville@comcast.net](mailto:fonville@comcast.net)  
[michpens.com](http://michpens.com)

Midlands Pen Club (Omaha area)  
Contacts: Kim Sosin, [kim@penquest.com](mailto:kim@penquest.com)  
or Carl Kibler, [CAKibler@aol.com](mailto:CAKibler@aol.com)

Minnesota Pen Club  
Francis Dulbalian  
Ph: 615.645.2460

New Orleans Pen Club  
Contact: Thomas Bickham  
[tbickiii@bostmail.com](mailto:tbickiii@bostmail.com)  
Ph: 225.677.9448

North Texas Fountain Pen Collectors  
Contact: Lowell Lindsey  
[llindsey2@verizon.net](mailto:llindsey2@verizon.net)

Ontario, Canada  
Contact Names: Dong Ritchie/Mike Walker  
Email: [pen@londonpenclub.com](mailto:pen@londonpenclub.com)  
[londonpenclub.com](http://londonpenclub.com)  
Blog: [londonpenclub.wordpress.com](http://londonpenclub.wordpress.com)

Ottawa Fountain Pen Society  
Contact: George Cornwall  
[higub@ottawafountainpensociety.org](mailto:higub@ottawafountainpensociety.org)  
[ottawafountainpensociety.org](http://ottawafountainpensociety.org)

Pan Pacific Pen Club, N. California  
Contact: Mark Helfen  
[pppc@marketfire.com](mailto:pppc@marketfire.com)

Philadelphia Pen Collectors Group  
Contact: Robert Maand  
[rmaand@philadelphiapens.com](mailto:rmaand@philadelphiapens.com)  
[philadelphiapens.com](http://philadelphiapens.com)

Portland Pen Club  
Contact: Carla Mortensen  
[carla\\_mortensen@hotmail.com](mailto:carla_mortensen@hotmail.com)

Research Triangle Pen Club  
Contact: Ross McKinney  
[ross@rosspens.com](mailto:ross@rosspens.com)  
Deb Kinney  
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From the Stacks

## LIBRARY UPDATE

BY DAN REPERT, PCA LIBRARIAN

The dodo bird and I have a lot in common. I was just thinking the other day that I really didn't have anything to write about the librarian. The library has gone the way of the twenty-first century while I seem to have lost a mission.

That really is not true. I have a stack of catalogs at my feet that need to be scanned and uploaded to the website. Some of those catalogs are bigger than my scanner so I have to teach myself to scan and paste them back together. I would be perfectly willing to do that except that all manuals are now online. The "name" that I would give to an action or process is never the same as the manual writer gives it. One, then, is forced to look through 500 pages of on screen text. Yes, I understand it is the fact that I am old that makes it harder for me to scroll down through all that gibberish to find what I am looking for. It was much more comfortable for

me to pick up the manual and flip through until I saw a picture something like I wanted to do.

So the "new" librarian tasks consist of sticking the catalog in the scanner, going through the requisite key strokes, saving it and on to the next page. Not that I'm a huge "people person" but it was nice to find Larry or Bill's letter in the mail asking for a few pages to be copied and sent off. I was able to say hello to the very capable folks who made the copies for me. Then I talked with the folks at the post office when I mailed it. Human interaction I believe it's called.

My wife accuses me of talking to my computer—make that Yelling At my computer. Perhaps I will give it a name. Make it seem more human interactive. Dodo, for, believe it or not, it too will someday be extinct.

## Upcoming Shows

*Location and dates may be subject to change; please contact the show organizers to verify information below. The PCA keeps an up-to-date listing of current and pending U.S. pen shows on the PCA website: [pencollectorsofamerica.com](http://pencollectorsofamerica.com).*

**DC Supershow**

August 6-9

Sheraton Premiere Tyson's Corner  
Bob Johnson, 864.963.3834

**Dallas Pen Show**

October 2-3

Sheraton Dallas North  
Pete Kirby, 972.529.6364

**NYC/NJ Pen Show**

October 9-11

Park Central Hotel, NYC  
Mary Ann & Steve Zucker, 718.434.3713

**Toronto Pen Show**

October 24

Hilton Toronto Airport  
Bill Smith, 416.878.0695

**Columbus Pen Show**

November 5-8

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Terry Mawhorter: 614.619.5025

*Show organizers are encouraged to submit show details for this column to the editor.*

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Back issues of *The Pennant* are available. Most are photocopies. All are \$10 each + \$5 postage and handling in the U.S. per order, overseas postage will vary. All requests for reprints should be addressed to:

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As a current member, don't forget to send any updated personal information to [info@pencollectorsofamerica.com](mailto:info@pencollectorsofamerica.com). If you've moved, changed your name, changed your email, added a FAX line, or made any other changes, it will not be correct in the listings unless you tell us! We are pleased to offer membership levels with added benefits. As a non-profit, all-volunteer organization, the PCA is only as good as the support it receives. Your contributions keep *The Pennant* arriving on your doorstep three times a year, help support the PCA projects and enable the PCA to continue to grow and improve. When you renew your membership this year, we hope you'll consider one of our special new membership levels, which are detailed at the left. Even if your membership is not up for renewal, it's easy to upgrade to one of the special membership levels—simply drop us a line or email us at: [info@pencollectors.com](mailto:info@pencollectors.com). Thanks for your support!

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**JOHN BOSLEY** has been collecting and using vintage fountain pens and inks for eight years. John currently lives in Westminster, CO with his wife Belinda. They both enjoy hiking, especially in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. John runs the website [VintageInks.com](http://VintageInks.com) which sells vintage inks and ink bottles.



**VICTOR CHEN** recently retired from his position as Professor of History at Chabot College. Chen continues his Tech Notes column, a regular feature in *The Pennant*.



**KATE GLADSTONE** teaches and remedies hand-writing internationally, working and traveling from her home in Albany, NY. To better help left-handers, she taught herself to write left-handed.



**RICHARD JARVIS** has spent more than 20 years in journalism, including time as a newspaper reporter and editor. He has suffered from a life-long pen affliction that seems to have no cure in sight. His collecting interests include vintage pens with stub and other specialty nibs as well as German piston-fillers. He lives in Roswell, Ga., and is a native of North Carolina.



**VANCE KOVEN** is Senior Counsel at Converse, a telecom industry company, and a composer of classical music (guess which of those pays the mortgage!). He has used fountain pens since childhood, but has been collecting for about ten years, mostly orange Parker Duofolds, brown Sheaffer Balances, Gehas, Morrisons and whatever else appeals. He lives in Boston, has one wife, three children, and one cat.



**LAUREL KAUFMAN** is a member of the Portland Pen Club and has been collecting for four years. Her collection is eclectic with pens found in the wild that she can restore and "ready to write" purchases from others in the pen community. She loves flex and italic nibs. She is a high school counselor at Forest Grove High School. She has appreciated the gracious mentoring given by other pen enthusiasts.



**ANDREAS LAMBROU** started collecting fountain pens at the age of 12 in his native Cyprus. He is the co-owner of Classic Pens Ltd. founded in England in 1987 and Classic Pens Inc. established in Los Angeles, California in 1998. He is the author of three well known books: *Fountain Pens Vintage and Modern* (1989), *Fountain Pens of the World* (1995),

*Fountain Pens USA and UK* (2000). He enjoys attending both Regional and National Pen Shows.

**TOM REHKOPF** is a computer system architect in Atlanta, Ga. He has written several articles for *The Pennant* and has been collecting pens for over 15 years. "My collection remains largely unfocused," he says proudly, "except of course for brown Parker '51's, which you can never have enough of."



**DAN REPERT** collects off-brand Sheaffers such as Univer, W.A.S.P., and Craig. He is the librarian and a former vice president of the P.C.A. He worked for Sheaffer for over 12 years, and is currently involved in historic building renovation in Fort Madison, Ia.



**BOB SPEERBRECHER**, well known as Speerbob on eBay and the various pen forums, is a U.S. government employee who learned the pen business working part-time at Bertram's Inkwell for five years. He and his wife Tanya have spent nine of the past 20 years in Thailand—working three stints of three years each. Bob says he has no particular focus to his collecting and tends to write with something different most every day.



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**Articles:** We welcome articles dealing with pen collecting, writing instruments, pen manufacturers, ephemera, news about your recent finds, and Letters to the Editor. The *Pennant* "Author's Guidelines" document is available upon request, and members of the editorial staff and PCA Board are available to assist you. Submit your article in Microsoft Word or TextEdit. Please do not use auto-numbering or imbed your images in your text file.

**Illustrations/Photos:** When submitting images, be certain that they are scanned at no less than 300 pixels per inch. Photos look best on a non-reflective solid white background (lucite is good and foam board works well). If white is not available, any solid color will do. Images may be submitted as email attachments or on CD as JPG images. We cannot use images imbedded in text documents or spreadsheets.

**Deadlines:** Available on request. Contributions are subject to editorial review and should be sent to: PCA, Attn: Editor, *The Pennant*, PO Box 447, Fort Madison, IA 52627-0447 or via email to: editor@pencollectors.com.

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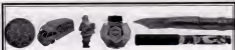
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